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4-year proposal cycle

**Proposal Guidelines for
Sea Grant Extension and Communications Proposals**

INTRODUCTION

Each omnibus proposal includes an outreach component. Outreach includes Sea Grant extension, communications, and, when it is part of extension, education. The outreach proposals should reflect a four-year cycle of funding and be submitted with the omnibus proposal. The outreach proposals should reflect the goals of NOAA's Strategic Plan, Sea Grant's Network Plan, and individual program plans. Outreach proposals should undergo a review process designed and carried out by the state or local Sea Grant program. The proposals should be reviewed by peer professionals in extension, communications and education and by representatives of the user communities.

The four-year proposal is the document of record to the outside world with regard to our outreach efforts in marine resources use, development and conservation; our goals and plans for the next four years; and our manner of carrying out the objectives. The proposals should be able to stand on their own if an outside person were to ask what Sea Grant outreach efforts do and hope to accomplish, and how they are managed and staffed. Year 2, 3 and 4 proposals, on the other hand, are much-attenuated summary progress reports of the prior year's activities.

The four-year proposals are primarily forward-looking documents and should concentrate on program plans and outcomes for the next four years. The proposal guidelines below build substantially on the work done by the Sea Grant network and the NSGO under the Joint Committee on Modified Procedures and its two subcommittees, including one for Marine Advisory Services Outreach and the other for Communications. The proposal guidelines below differ primarily with respect to reporting accomplishments as part of the proposal. Accomplishments will be a major focus for the evaluation process which will include self-evaluations and program reviews, and will need to be documented and described as part of those processes.

Guidelines for extension proposals and guidelines for communications proposals follow.

4-YEAR PROPOSAL CYCLE - Extension

YEAR 1

A. Situation statement:

This background statement documents the significance of the program areas and provides a rationale for the sub-programs you have chosen. Data on the size of the audience, the economic value of the topical area, promising research developments, and the significance of the area to users can suggest the importance of the program area. You may wish to provide in this section a concise summary of advisory/extension accomplishments from the previous period, and document any broad changes in program direction.

B. Program goals, objectives and plans:

This section documents the overall goals you plan to achieve in the 4-year period, lays out the specific objectives that will help you meet those goals, and describes the plans or methodology that will be used to meet the objectives. Each extension proposal provides general information about the program, the logic for being organized into sub-programs, and then outlines the sub-program in detail. Please identify any regional and/or multi-program activities.

1. In identifying goals, this section should describe the broad impact you hope to have through the Sea Grant Extension Program. This is a statement about where you see the program going and the effects it will have in the long run. In discussing goals, you may want to identify the impact you hope to have in a number of different areas - establishing or enabling organizations or businesses, affecting the health of a resource, catalyzing activity on a regional level, improving public health and safety, or affecting standards or policy.

2. Sub-Program objectives: For each sub-program area, describe the specific objectives and plans to reach the overall goals. What are the specific outreach methods you plan to use to reach the objectives, such as workshops, industrial collegia, conferences, etc. and how do you plan to reach the objectives? Who will be responsible for attaining them? What change in the situation do you foresee? Given the situation, what can the Sea Grant program do to help resolve the situation? The objectives should be stated clearly with measurable terms appropriate for eventual evaluation and review.

C. Anticipated outcomes:

Identify how things will be different in four years because of extension efforts. Identify the most significant anticipated outcomes in the proposal. These could include: Evidence that people are behaving or thinking differently; evidence the groups, institutions or people have used the information you have provided; impacts on policy, law or institutional development; evidence that extension activities have contributed to health of a resource, or the viability of an industry; economic and social impacts.

D. Organization, staffing and management:

Describe staff and level of effort (time commitment), area of expertise, and source(s) of salary support. Identify staff vacancies and/or what new staff positions are needed. Describe how the outreach effort is managed and reviewed. Explain the planning and evaluation processes used, and identify how the needs of users are incorporated into program management. This section should identify how Sea Grant extension works with other components of the Sea Grant program and with related extension efforts within the university. Provide an organizational chart showing relationship within the university and with the Sea Grant program. If outside funding sources will be used to augment program activity, please identify the sources and activities.

E. Budgets and justifications:

Along with the budget forms, please include a breakdown of federal and matching funds by Sea Grant strategic plan categories.

Changes from the initial extension proposal in program direction, staffing, or level of effort should be clearly identified in subsequent yearly omnibus submissions.

4-YEAR PROPOSAL CYCLE--Communications

YEAR 1

A. Situation statement:

Write the proposal as though it were being reviewed by someone not acquainted with Sea Grant. Set the stage by describing the communications project within the context of your individual Sea Grant program, the region, and the national network. Where does communications fit into the overall program structure? What are the local, statewide, regional and national issues that mold communication efforts? You may wish to provide in this section a concise summary of selected communications accomplishments from the previous period, and document any broad changes in program direction or emphases that you are contemplating.

B. Program Goals, Objectives, and Plans:

This section documents the overall goals you plan to achieve in the 4-year period, lays out the specific objectives that will help you meet those goals, and describes the plans or methodology--the tools, tactics, and talent--that will be used to meet the objectives.

1. Goals--What are your long-term communications goals? Identify the broad impact you hope to have through your communications project. Is it greater coverage of Sea Grant in the mass media, more visibility for the program via the electronic superhighway, wider use of Sea Grant information by targeted audiences, greater scientific literacy among citizens, etc?

2. Objectives--Your objectives should be stated succinctly in well-defined and measurable terms.

- *What are your specific objectives for the next four years?

- *How are these objectives related to the goals of your program?

- *What priority areas are to be addressed? What are the key information gaps and how do you plan to cover them?

- *What are your primary audiences and what is the main message you hope to convey to each audience?

- *What kind(s) of information and/or marketing research will you use to focus your efforts?

3. Plans and Methods--In this section, describe the "tools, tactics and talent" you plan to use meet objectives.

- *What specific strategy or strategies do you plan to use and why?
- *What specific communications techniques and technology will you develop and/or employ to achieve your objectives?
- *What medium or media will you use to accomplish your objectives? How/why did you select a particular medium?
- *What are the ultimate communication products and services you will provide?
- *What is the time-line and schedule for carrying out your work plans?

C. Anticipated Outcomes

Identify how things will be different in four years because of communications efforts during the 4-year cycle. Identify the most significant anticipated outcomes in the proposal, by discussing topics such as:

- *What are the anticipated results and benefits of your efforts? What do you expect to happen through your communications products and services?
- *How do you propose to evaluate and/or document the success of your efforts? How will you measure the results (demographics, audience surveys, review of product distribution, etc.)?
- *What formal and/or informal feedback mechanisms will you use for ensuring two-way communication with your target audiences?

D. Organization, staffing, and management:

Explain how communications works with and provides support to the different components of your program--research, extension, education, and management. What is the relationship with related communications entities within the university/institution? What is your degree of involvement in regional and/or multi-program activities and in communications activities of the larger Sea Grant network?

Describe your communications staff by name, title, time commitment (FTE), area of expertise, and source (s) of salary support. Are there any staff vacancies and/or what new staff positions are needed or planned? What other sources of funding are available for conducting your communications work?

Explain communications planning and how the overall communications effort is reviewed and managed. How are the needs of the users and audiences identified and incorporated into the planning process?

E Budgets and Justifications:

Provide detailed budget forms with justifications for requested travel, permanent equipment, etc.

Changes from the initial communications proposal in program direction, staffing, or level of effort should be clearly identified in subsequent yearly omnibus submissions.